

Madame Chairperson and members of the committee, for the record my name is Novelene Martin and I live in Miles City. My son, Ethan, has been receiving Part C ~~Early Intervention Services~~/Family Education and Support for little over 1 year. ^{With} DEAP ~~has been providing these services~~. When Ethan ^{At} was nearly 10 months old, a ~~consultation with~~ a geneticist told us he was mentally retarded and we ~~should~~ ^{to} not let him play team sports because ^{as} he would not be smart or coordinated ^{enough} ~~enough to do so~~. Evaluations by DEAP showed delays of up to 6 months in many areas. The Part C service has been instrumental in the ^{Ethan's} progress Ethan ~~has made this past year~~. The latest evaluation at almost 22 months of age showed Ethan's skill levels are between 20 and 22 months in most areas. If this progress continues, Ethan will not need the life-long supports from the Developmental Disabilities Program as predicted by the geneticist. Our family is very appreciative of the support

from DEAP and the Developmental Disabilities Program. We are also very grateful to the legislature for continuing to fund the Part C Early Intervention Program.

I encourage the legislature to continue to support this program. The State contracts for a set number of Part C slots, however, many providers are serving more children than their contract specifies. Part C services are an entitlement program, so providers must serve all eligible children, putting a strain at the local level. From 2001 to 2005, Montana has seen a nearly 29% increase in children being served in Part C, funding has not kept up with this increase. This under funding not only affects families receiving Part C but those youth between ages 3 and 18 receiving general family education and support. When providers are forced to over serve in Part C, they are less able to use service dollars to meet the needs of other youth. While my family has other resources,

primarily insurance, other families are not so fortunate. When other resources are not available, the responsibility to fund the service needs of the child falls on the provider of Part C. Given the number of children being served versus the number of slots contracted for by the State, it would seem reasonable at some point in time for services to suffer or to be rationed. As my family has seen, Part C services can prevent individuals from needing higher costs supports in the public school setting and as adults. It seems ~~that~~ the investment in fully funding Part C services will pay huge dividends in the future for Montana's children.

Thank you for your time and commitment to the children and families of Montana.

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